

87-GS-85 VOTED: The Sixteenth General Synod [of the United Church of Christ] adopts the Resolution “the Relationship Between the United Church of Christ and the Jewish Community.”

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UCC AND THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Historical Background and Theological Rationale

Christianity, developing its faith and identity, its life, and its creativity from a common heritage with Judaism, has a unique relationship to the Jewish people. The New Testament can only be adequately understood in the light of this common heritage with the Jewish people. The New Testament testifies to how painful was the historical process of separation of the Christian community from the Jewish people.

We in the United Church of Christ acknowledge that the Christian Church has, throughout much of its history, denied God's continuing covenantal relationship with the Jewish people expressed in the faith of Judaism. This denial often has led to outright rejection of the Jewish people and to theologically and humanly intolerable violence. The Church's frequent portrayal of the Jews as blind, recalcitrant, evil, and rejected by God has found expression in much Christian theology, liturgy, and education. Such a negative portrayal of the Jewish people and of Judaism has been a factor in the shaping of anti-Jewish attitudes of societies and the policies of governments. The most devastating lethal metastasis of this process occurred in our own century during the Holocaust.

Summary

Faced with this history from which we as Christians cannot, and must not, disassociate ourselves, we ask for God's forgiveness through our Lord Jesus Christ. We pray for divine grace that will enable us, more firmly than ever before, to turn from this path of rejection and persecution to affirm that Judaism has not been superseded by Christianity; that Christianity is not to be understood as the successor religion to Judaism; God's covenant with the Jewish people has not been abrogated. God has not rejected the Jewish people God is faithful in keeping covenant.

Resolution

WHEREAS, the God we worship is the God of all creation; and

WHEREAS, the Christian communities of recent times have come more and more to recognize that God's covenant with the Jewish people stands inviolate (Romans 9-11); and

WHEREAS, the Christian Church also stands bound to the same God in covenant, the covenant affirmed and embodied in Jesus as the Christ; and

WHEREAS, the Christian Church has denied for too long the continuing validity of God's covenant with the Jewish people, with all the attendant evils that have followed upon such denial;

THEREFORE, the Sixteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ affirms its recognition that God's covenant with the Jewish people has not been rescinded or abrogated by God, but remains in full force, inasmuch as "the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable" (Rom. 11:29).

FURTHER, the Sixteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ expresses its determination to seek out and to affirm the consequences of this understanding of the continuing divine covenant with the Jewish people in the Church's theological statements, its liturgical practices, its hymnody, its educational work, and its witness before the world.

1. Calls upon those boards and instrumentalities responsible for the development of our educational materials to:

Examine and evaluate the image of Jews and Judaism presented in curriculum for use in local churches, seminary Church History courses, and other literature which is used to promote greater understanding of our tradition throughout the United Church of Christ, and

On the basis of the evaluation to develop guidelines and educational resources for suggested use in the local church and seminaries to enable the literature to be representative of the understanding of Judaism and the Jewish people as a continuing witness in Covenant to God's presence in the world.

2. Calls upon those boards, offices and instrumentalities responsible for the development of literature relating to worship in the United Church of Christ to examine the liturgical materials, and based on this evaluation to create guidelines which will reflect a sensitivity to the image of Jews and Judaism which is projected in our liturgical content.

3. Calls upon the Office for Church in Society to coordinate the work of the established Inter-agency Task Force on Jewish-Christian Relations, the Jewish-Christian Dialogue Project in the United Church of Christ, and other groups within the United Church of Christ locally and regionally, and nationally who are presently engaged in dialogue with the Jewish community.

4. Calls upon all local congregations, and regional judicatories of the United Church of Christ actively to engage in dialogue with the Jewish community. in order to establish relationships of trust and to participate in a joint witness against all injustice in our local communities and in the world.

Financial implications: As funds are available.

Office of General Ministries
United Church of Christ
Minister for Ecumenical Relations
The Rev. Lydia Veliko
216-736-2191
velikol@ucc.org